

# THE EYE SHIELD



Issue 51

May 2008

## CONTENTS

[Message From Me:](#) Featuring Knightmare QI.

[My Top Ten Sci-Fi and Fantasy Shows.](#)

[Remember This?:](#) The Swinging Pendulum.

[Adventure Time:](#) Can Dan survive in level two?

[Kids' TV Shows I Grew Up With:](#) Mainstays.

[Puzzle Page 1:](#) I Think I Read Somewhere... Part One.

[Classic Quest:](#) Naila, Aquila, Asmita and Samreen.

[The Strangeness of the Walls:](#) Chapter Three.

[Remember Her?:](#) Pixel.

[Knightmare Locations:](#) Bodiam Castle, East Sussex.

[If My Memory Serves Me True:](#) With Jim Waterman.

[Puzzle Page 2:](#) I Think I Read Somewhere... Part Two.

[Dungeoneer Dwellings:](#) Series 7.

[The Fastest Draw in the Dungeon:](#) Chapter Five.

[Poetry Corner:](#) Jeremy.

[Puzzle Answers.](#)

The Eye Shield Issue 51 is copyright Jake Collins 2008.

## MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue 51 of The Eye Shield. We start today with a small admin notice. It always goes without saying that Nicholas has done an absolutely fantastic job over the past nine-and-a-half years of creating and maintaining the Nightmare website; I still remember well that magical Saturday back in May 1999 when I first visited the site (it was my first time ever online) and knew that I had found something very special.

Inevitably, things move on as time goes by, and as I'm sure we're all aware, Nicholas is able to find very little spare time to devote to the website nowadays. Consequently, when a new issue of TES (like this one) is uploaded, there may be a small delay before a link appears in the "Updates" section of the front page. However, rest assured that TES will be available on the first day of every other month (January, March, May, July, September and November) even if it doesn't appear to be when you first visit the site.

To access TES, go to the relevant section of the forum and click on the topic devoted to the new issue, which will contain a link to the front page. You don't have to be a forum member to find and use the link, remember - it'll be in the dedicated TES section, just waiting within the brand new post for the brand new issue.

There, I hope that's all nice and clear. While we're on the subject of links, here's one for you: [www.freewebs.com/ravenseyemag](http://www.freewebs.com/ravenseyemag) If you're a fan of Raven, the excellent CBBC gameshow that has occasionally been mentioned very briefly in previous issues of TES, you really should check out The Eye Shield's new sister fanzine, The Raven's Eye. This monthly online Raven extravaganza is written by none other than Nightmare fan, Raven enthusiast and avid TES reader Ross Thompson. Although I myself can justifiably claim some credit for the idea of spawning The Raven's Eye, the magazine is entirely Ross's baby, and as I'm sure you'll agree, it really is brilliant! For in-depth analysis of Raven's past, present and future, plus (this month) an exclusive interview with series 7 runner-up Hanso, check out The Raven's Eye. Are you prepared? Then go!

Do you ever find yourself wondering just which issue of TES contains a *Remember Him?* about your favourite character, or a *Creature Feature* about your all-time favourite monster? If so, The Eye Shield Index is for

you! Nestled comfortably within the TES section of the forum, this comprehensive list of references tells you exactly where to look for all your Nightmare character, creature, puzzle and team needs. Check it out!

Okay, so what's in store for you in this issue? Well, you might like to take a look at my top ten sci-fi and fantasy shows. I've included details of several shows that I haven't written about before in TES, although there are also a few old favourites of mine that you might recognise. If this gets you in the mood for another compendium of TV treats, check out the final installment of Liam Callaghan's *Kids' TV Shows I Grew Up With*, in which some of the mainstays of children's television are examined in detail.

If you're in the mood for a story, find out how Kevin and chums are getting on in Ian Down's *The Strangeness of the Walls*, and then discover Rio's grisly fate at the hands of the Opposition in the final chapter of Ricky Temple's *The Fastest Draw in the Dungeon*. (Ricky informs me that there may be a sequel, so watch this space!) Also on the reader contributions front, Jim Waterman presents *If My Memory Serves Me True*, in which you might just discover that the human brain may not be as reliable as you've always thought. As ever, my sincere thanks go out to Liam, Ian, Ricky and Jim for their contributions - thanks for helping to make TES the best fanzine it can be, guys!

Before all that, of course, we take a look at some of the correspondence I've received from the weird and wonderful world of Nightmare fandom.

First and foremost, let's have a quick word from Ross Thompson about issue 50.

Issue 50 was really good! I loved the end part of Poetry Corner and I'm pleased that Josh and team have conquered the Dungeon!

*Ah, I knew that'd put me in a good mood! Cheers, Ross. Right, now let's see what else we've got in the mailbag.*

Here is something from Christopher Lunn.

Having just finished reading issues 49 and 50 of *The Eye Shield*, I thought I would finally lend my memories and comments to your excellent online magazine. I came into Nightmare quite late, having been just three when it started back in 1987. My earliest memories are of series 4; Nightmare was one of my favourite shows

from this point until its original cancellation.

I had, to be honest, forgotten all about Nightmare until about two years ago, when I stumbled upon this website. Hours of pleasure ensued as I viewed the information on the site and in The Eye Shield. I have since watched as many repeats as I can on Challenge.

Despite my fondness for the later series, I have since realised how good the first three series were. The introduction of the eye shield was detrimental to the show, and the later series go at a much slower pace, although I do think that Lord Fear was better than Mogdred.

Just to add my vote to the ongoing Motley/Folly debate, I think Motley was the funnier and more interesting character, and - along with Sylvester Hands - was Paul Valentine's best character.

*Great to hear from you, Chris. I remember the first time series 4 was on, I was struck by how few rooms they'd managed to get through in the first episode, which I found a bit disappointing at the time, despite my subsequent fondness for this series. There certainly cannot be any denying that the eye shield did waste a lot of potential game-playing time, particularly in series 4 and 5. However, I do quite like the kind of epic atmosphere it created, making each quest seem like a more tangible journey from beginning to end. I think on the whole, though, I prefer the mysterious, unknown atmosphere of the early years – even I cannot deny that series 4 is a bit samey in places.*

*Another vote there for Motley as the better character. I think the main reason for the popular opinion on this is that Motley had so much more time to develop and endear himself to viewers than Folly did, and seeing as Folly was confined solely to two series where individual characters were given virtually no opportunity for any depth or development, thanks to the style of the early gameplay, I'm beginning to wonder whether it's really fair to compare him to Motley at all... still, at the end of the day, there can be no denying the fact that they were both jesters!*

**After reading last issue's *Kids' TV Shows I Grew Up With* by Ricky Temple, Liam Callaghan was moved to write the following passage.**

Ricky Temple mentioned The Smoggies - I used to love that one too! I can't remember much in terms of whole episodes, but I remember all the characters, the distinctive hairstyles of the Suntots, and the dimwitted Smoggies themselves. I think Polluto was my favourite; I seem to remember he ate coal! I always felt kind of sorry for him, and Clarence to some degree - I had the impression that neither of them really wanted to be there, but they couldn't say no to Emma.

I also remember Tugs! The article has just made me look it up on the Internet Movie Database to see who did some of those voices - I see it was narrated by Patrick Allen, who also narrated the first Blackadder series! Now I read that, it does ring a bell, that voice!

*It's great how we all remember these childhood shows with such fondness. As I've said before, I have serious doubts that modern youngsters will remember today's shows in the same way because there are SO MANY OF THEM and they're on ALL THE TIME. I guess only time will tell...*

## Jim Waterman considers the fairness of three Nightmare deaths.

Overall, I have little sympathy for Simon's team (series 3). They made a near-catastrophic left/right mistake in the bomb room; Simon seemed reluctant to move when Mr Grimwold was chasing him, even when he was shouted at loudly; there was another left/right near-disaster on the ledge when they needed the candle; and, finally, when the plunge off the cliff came, they had only just checked his position and direction, so they should have known not to take him so far forward.

Considering the first lot from series 2 (Martin's team), two out of three with Olgarth would have been enough for any other team to reach level two, but in this case a perfect score was essential to avoid getting blasted to bits in level one! Considering that Scott and friends (series 3) made it into level two with only one correct answer, is that justice?

*Here we have the familiar and ticklish problem of just how unfair Nightmare was on certain teams at certain times. Of course, we don't know how many little mistakes these teams had made and been let off, so we can't really judge them in the same way as Tim Child and the production team did at the time.*

*I think the main reason that Simon's team was slightly weak was that they were so young and nervous, but I still think they should have been given a more reliable way to check Simon's position with that amulet of invisibility, in very much the same way that Steven had his gauntlet in series 2.*

*Poor old Martin and friends did find themselves being used as guinea pigs for series 2, though, didn't they? Two correct wall monster questions earned them the password for level one instead of an object clue, which was what they really needed. Fortunately, although not for Martin, this rather unfair new aspect of the game had disappeared by the third quest of the series.*

Now, if you're experiencing Nightmare QI withdrawal symptoms, you'll enjoy this next bit:

### 1. What is the proper name of the weapon carried by the Automatum?

**Correct answer:** A flail.

**Cliché:** A morning star.

**Explanation:** I myself have been guilty of using this term incorrectly several times, but technically, a morning star doesn't have a chain joining the handle and the spiked ball – it's just a stick with a spiked ball on top of it. The Automatum carries a flail, which does have a chain.

### 2. Which character personally killed the most dungeoneers?

**Correct answer:** Lillith.

**Clichés:** Mogdred, Lord Fear.

**Explanation:** Neither Mogdred nor Lord Fear was ever very keen on the personal touch – the outright winner for the character with the most victims is Lillith, who killed three dungeoneers during her two-series run; namely Mave (episode 102), Akash (episode 207) and Anthony (episode 214).

### 3. Which is the only team to have the advisors as well as the dungeoneer physically affected by the circumstances of their death?

**Correct answer:** Chris I (Team 3 of Series 2).

**Cliché:** No particular cliché.

**Explanation:** When Medusa turned Chris to stone, he was powerless to stop her, as he had no magic shield with which to defend himself. On this occasion, his advisors also turned to stone, leading to Treguard's cringeworthy pun about getting a "stony" silence from them.

**4. Which dungeoneer is the first to find a scroll on a clue table?**

**Correct answer:** Tony (Team 5 of Series 2).

**Cliché:** Sarah (Team 3 of Series 5).

**Explanation:** Scrolls were commonplace throughout series 5-8, and Sarah was the first to read one in a clue room in order to help her choose a clue object. However, series 2's Tony was the first to come across a scroll, in the level two clue room; he picked it up but did not read it, as per the instructions of the Oracle of Confusion, but unfortunately he neglected to pick up the gauntlet (quite literally, in this case), which eventually led to his downfall.

**5. Which team is the first to choose their own quest object, rather than have it told to them?**

**Correct answer:** Neil (Team 7 of Series 2).

**Cliché:** Helen II (Team 1 of Series 4).

**Explanation:** Series 4 was the first time that teams habitually chose their own quests, but there was one single instance of this taking place in series 1-3. Neil and friends were allowed to choose their own quest object by walking through a door bearing its symbol; they chose the Sword. Consequently, despite scoring only one with Granitas, the wall monster gave out an object clue in place of the identity of the quest object – cushy!

**6. In the minecart's first series 3 appearance, which character was available for giving the starting push?**

**Correct answer:** McGrew.

**Cliché:** Motley.

**Explanation:** Motley and McGrew were the only ones who ever pushed the minecart, and Motley was the first one to actually do it (with Leo), but the minecart had already appeared once before in series 3 by this stage, with Cliff in the third episode. On this occasion, McGrew was handy to flex his mighty muscles for a bit of pushing, but as we know, the team scuppered their chance to earn his help and died as a result.

**7. In series 4, which dungeoneer is the first to release Gundrada from the stocks?**

**Correct answer:** Simon III (Team 4 of Series 4).

**Cliché:** Alistair (Team 2 of Series 4).

**Explanation:** Simon was actually the first and only dungeoneer to release Gundrada from the stocks, as the other two times when she was trapped, it was in the pillory!

**8. What do these three characters have in common? HORDRISS, SMIRKENORFF, MELLISANDRE.**

**Correct answer:** They did not speak during their first appearances.

**Cliché:** Anything to do with spellings of names, actors or numbers of series.

**Explanation:** These three characters had no lines during their first appearances on the programme – for Smirkenorff, it took an entire year to find

his voice, while Hordriss and Mellie both made silent appearances in series 3 (during episodes 4 and 1 respectively) before returning in the next episode (in both cases) with some lines.

9. **Which is the only winning team not to be pictured (or at least to have their dungeoneer pictured) in the end credits of the episode in which they won?**

**Correct answer:** Barry's (Team 7 of Series 7).

**Cliché:** Dunstan's (Team 6 of Series 8).

**Explanation:** For whatever reason, Barry and friends are not immortalised at the end of the final episode of series 7. It may take Dunstan and friends a while to show up during the closing credits of Knightmare's final episode, but they appear towards the end, as we see their portraits hanging in the Hall of Fame.

10. **Who is the last dungeoneer to make use of a trapdoor?**

**Correct answer:** Dunstan (Team 6 of Series 8).

**Cliché:** Rebecca (Team 5 of Series 8).

**Explanation:** Rebecca is the last dungeoneer to use a trapdoor to change levels, thanks to Dunstan's affiliation with the Short Cut, but Dunstan falls through a trapdoor on board the Golden Galleon as he attempts level three, enabling him to escape from some miremen.

Rank	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
1	Ross T	4	4	4	4	0	3	4	0	4	4	31
2	HStorm	2	3	3	0	4	4	2	4	4	3	29
3	Pooka	3	2	2	2	1	4	1	3	2	3	23
4	Jim W	4	0	4	1	1	4	1	0	3	2	20
5	Liam C	1	4	4	1	3	4	2	3	3	4	18
6	Chris S	0	4	4	4	1	4	1	4	4	4	10
7	Gehn L	2	3	4	2	0	4	0	4	4	4	9
8	Joe G-J	4	2	3	4	1	4	1	3	1	10	-8

Congratulations to our new Knightmare QI champion, Ross Thompson! The fanzine Gods have rewarded you with this great honour for bringing The Raven's Eye into being, Ross, so my sincere congratulations go out to you.

Again, I am very pleased with the level of response that this round has received. I hope all you Knightmare QI acolytes decide to enter again this time - excluding the author of the next round, of course - and so keep up the Knightmare QI phenomenon!

Speaking of which, here are the questions for the next round. These have been written by Liam Callaghan, who is keen to catch you all out, so be careful!

1. What does the following sequence represent? 19, 31, 39, 48, 55, 69.
2. Which was the least common quest object?
3. During which quest did Mellisandre first appear?
4. What was the most common contestant name?

5. What does this sequence represent? MA1, TA1, CR6, SH11, CR12, SW12, SH14, CR16.
6. What does this sequence represent? 3210, 3712, 4530, 0431, 3411, 0421, 0322, 1231.
7. What number did all the series 3 dungeoneers roll on the die?
8. Which method of changing levels had the longest lifespan?
9. Throughout all eight series of Nightmare, how many contestants died?
10. How many characters said “Enter, Stranger,” during Nightmare’s run?

As usual, four points are available for each question - one for supplying the correct answer, one for identifying the cliché, and two for any Quite Interesting supplementary information that is vaguely relevant to the question. E-mail your answers to the address at the foot of the page, or PM them to Eyeshield on the Nightmare Discussion Forum if you prefer, by Sunday June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008 and you could be the next champion of Nightmare QI. Wouldn't that be something? Answers and results will be revealed in issue 52.



## MY TOP TEN SCI-FI AND FANTASY SHOWS

When I read in September 1995 that *Nightmare* was imminently to be shown on a cable channel called Sci-Fi, I found myself wondering whether my beloved show really fitted into the category of science-fiction. I still have my doubts, but for the purposes of this, my latest fascinating one-off article, I have taken even greater liberties by broadening the category to include science-fiction and fantasy shows, which really does cover a multitude of sins. Anyway, after much soul-searching, I have decided upon a final countdown of my top ten favourite sci-fi and fantasy shows, and now I'm going to share them with you.

### 10. *Bravestarr* (1987 - 1988)

This was the last cartoon ever produced by Filmation, which was the company that brought us *He-Man* and *She-Ra*, as well as a whole host of cartoons that never made it out of the USA. There was a strong sci-fi element to this show, mainly as it was set on the distant planet of New Texas, and there were plenty of spaceships, laser guns and weird-looking aliens thrown in for good measure.

There was also a distinctly Wild West feel to the show, as both cowboy-like and Indian-like characters featured prominently; Marshal *Bravestarr* himself had strong elements of both cowboy and Indian about him, which may have been slightly misleading to the cartoon's young audience. Anyway, I've always enjoyed this show - it's not nearly as good as *He-Man* or even *She-Ra*, but I have very fond memories of watching it as a nipper, and I still enjoy it today. By far my favourite element of the show is Marshal *Bravestarr*'s magical ability to call on his four great animal powers - Eyes of the Hawk, Ears of the Wolf, Strength of the Bear (by far the most useful) and Speed of the Puma. Cool!

### 9. *The Hitch Hikers' Guide to the Galaxy* (1981)

The BBC's television adaptation of Douglas Adams's famous sci-fi yarn has been a favourite of mine ever since I discovered the show on BBC2 in 2001, when it was repeated in homage to its then recently deceased author. The radio adaptation was far more successful; the TV version only managed one series of six episodes, but I find it great fun to watch and very funny in places. By today's standards, the special effects look very cheap indeed, but this only adds to the charm of the show, in my eyes. I would certainly much rather watch this than the more recent movie adaptation, which largely sacrificed the story in favour of special

effects, which is never a good idea. In fact, an effect that I think the TV show pulls off really well is the animated screens of the *Guide* itself - they look like they've been done on a computer, but they were actually produced by painstakingly writing and drawing onto sheets of glass! You certainly wouldn't find a labour of love like that in modern television productions!

My one objection to the show is that there is not enough interaction between the characters and the *Guide* itself - Arthur Dent carries the book in his dressing gown throughout the entire show, but he really only interacts with it during the first episode. Thereafter, the voice of Peter Jones pops up during the story to give us snippets from the *Guide* that are pertinent to the story, even though the characters themselves are unaware of this. I suppose the situation was the same on the radio, really, but as you couldn't see the characters, it was not so obvious.

Of course, one of my favourite bits of fun trivia is that no less than three *Knightmare* actors appeared in *The Hitch Hikers' Guide to the Galaxy* - Rayner "Skarkill" Bourton as a galactic newsreader, Michael "Brother Mace" Cule as a Vogon guard, and David "Pickle" Learner as Marvin the Paranoid Android. Of course, as David mentioned in his TES interview, he doesn't do Marvin's voice and you really can't tell it's him, but it's good to know that he's in there anyway!

## **8. Red Dwarf (1988 - 1999)**

This BBC sci-fi sitcom from the minds of Rob Grant and Doug Naylor was staple viewing in my household throughout the 1990s. It tells the story of Dave Lister, the last human being in existence, who is forced to face the prospect of living out his days on a spaceship (called *Red Dwarf*, surprisingly enough) in deep space, with only a senile computer, a superficial and highly evolved cat, a clapped-out android and a supercilious hologram of his dead room-mate for company. As you can imagine, Lister found this situation very trying at times.

Like *Knightmare*, I think *Red Dwarf* suffers from a very weak (and final) eighth series. In theory, *Red Dwarf* VIII should have been excellent, as all four original regular cast members (Chris Barrie, Craig Charles, Danny John-Jules and Norman Lovett) were back in place for the first time since the end of series 2, and the crew had finally caught up with *Red Dwarf* itself, which had been AWOL for more than two series. However, it was NOT excellent AT ALL, and the final moments are just as

disappointing to me as those of Nightmare! Still, I'd better not harp on about it...

## **7. The X Files (1993 - 2002)**

This witty US sci-fi drama helped me to survive my teenage years with a smile on my face and, occasionally, a stab of fear in my heart. Special Agent Fox Mulder was in charge of investigating all the strange, paranormal cases that the rest of the FBI wanted to sweep under the carpet with a minimum amount of fuss. Mulder was a true believer, as he had witnessed his sister being abducted by aliens when he was twelve. Consequently, he investigated every X File with gusto, which is why Special Agent Dana Scully (a medical doctor with a purely scientific outlook) was brought in to discredit his "crazy" theories.

Inevitably, Mulder and Scully developed a close bond, and the simmering sexual tension (which was finally resolved in series 7) between lead actors David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson was one of the major ongoing themes of the show. Mulder and Scully investigated many strange cases together, some of them involving a particular race of aliens and their involvement in the disappearance of Mulder's sister, which eventually led to Scully's acceptance of the existence of things that go bump in the night. With David Duchovny's appearances in the final two series severely reduced, Robert Patrick was brought in as Special Agent John Doggett, who became the non-believer that Scully was trying to win round, which was a nice little twist.

The show eventually ended (after nine series) with Mulder and Scully going on the run from the FBI and the world in general, but realising, after everything they had seen and been through together, that there was a lot more to life, the universe and everything than they had ever thought before, and being content in that knowledge. Profound! Apparently, David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson have both signed up for a follow-up movie, so look out for it!

## **6. Blazing Dragons (1996 - 1999)**

This one definitely falls into the fantasy section - it's a cartoon based on the legends of Camelot, with the main characters appearing as dragons! The word that best describes this show, I think, is fun! It certainly kept me in stitches for thirteen weeks during the summer of 1996. Monty Python's Terry Jones came up with the idea behind the whole concept, which started life as a computer game.

In theory, the show was about the heroic escapades of King Allfire and the Dragon Knights of the Square Table, but it was actually Flicker (squire to the lazy Sir Loungelot) and Princess Flame (King Allfire's daughter) who prevented Camelhot from falling down around everyone's ears, or falling into the hands of the evil Count Geoffrey (one of the show's few human characters), each week.

Unfortunately, the second series of the show was vastly different from the first, as it was obviously aimed at a younger audience. The overriding difference was that the blossoming romance between Flicker and Flame was almost completely disregarded, which was a complete travesty! CITV started showing the second series in January 1998, but they didn't get round to finishing it until the summer of 1999 - obviously it wasn't just me who thought the show had taken a nosedive! However, as Rosey has since convinced me, you have to appreciate series 2 for what it is, and it's actually still very funny in places. Comparing it to series 1 just doesn't work, as they are so vastly different. And I guess I'm just going to have to live with that...

## **5. Mona the Vampire (2000 - 2005)**

The realm of fantasy and imagination is an overriding theme of this cartoon, which is why I've allowed myself to include it here. I went on about Mona the Vampire at some length in the last issue, so I won't bore you with the details again. However, it is one of my favourite modern shows, and I couldn't compile this countdown without giving it a mention - believe me, I tried. Kudos to you, Emma Taylor-Isherwood, for bringing the fantastic character of Mona "the Vampire" Parker to life, and keeping me watching for the past eight years.

I was watching a film called *Bridge to Terabithia* recently, which is a rather beautiful yet bittersweet story that explores the tantalising idea that reality - or what different people perceive to be reality - can be shaped and even controlled by the boundless power of the imagination. About fifteen minutes into the film, I started thinking *Hey, this is just like Mona!* For the next forty-five minutes, I was quite right. Just like Mona the Vampire, *Bridge to Terabithia* mixes reality and fantasy to such an extent that you're sometimes not quite sure what's real and what isn't, or indeed if there really is any difference between the two. (Of course there comes a certain point in the film where it ceases to be very much like Mona at all, and it's time to get the hankies out, but that's beside the

point.)

As with Mona, some people might be of the opinion that the fantasy world presented in the film is somehow less of a reality than the worlds of Harry Potter or Narnia or the Lord of the Rings, because it exists only in the imaginations of the two lead characters. I, however, am of precisely the opposite opinion. There is more power contained in imagination than a lot of people realise, particularly once they pass a certain age, and Mona always helps me to remember that.

#### **4. The Mysterious Cities of Gold (1982 - 1983)**

As I have mentioned before, my passion for this epic cartoon has been reignited in recent years. I feel quite justified in classifying *The Mysterious Cities of Gold* as a sci-fi show, as it is set in the sixteenth century, but features a plethora of solar-powered devices, such as the colossal flying machine known as the Golden Condor, the solar ship Solaris, and even a giant solar crystal with the power to regenerate human cells. It also tells the story of how Atlantis was wiped out by a nuclear war that was fought with laser guns, which wouldn't have looked out of place in a *Star Wars* film! (I wonder whether Lissard took part.)

However, it is the overwhelming sense of great adventure and the strong, engaging characters that make this show an absolute triumph in my eyes. The main character, Esteban, is brave, skilful, loyal, compassionate and steadfast, as every hero should be, but he has his doubts and fears (principally a fear of heights) just like the rest of us. His surprisingly intense relationship with Zia (the young Inca princess) is very compelling, and the wider friendship between Esteban, Zia and Tao is subtly yet powerfully done.

Another very strong character is Mendoza, the Spanish navigator, who really cannot be classified as either good or bad, which (as I have said before) is something you'd never see in modern kids' shows. Like Esteban, he is brave and skilful, but he is certainly not loyal and compassionate to any consistent degree. Mendoza obviously has a lot of respect and affection for Esteban, and looks on him in a fatherly way, but his overriding desire throughout the series is to find a City of Gold and become very rich indeed. Having said that, I think Mendoza comes off essentially as a positive character in the end, when he decides to stay and help Esteban and the Mayas fight the evil Olmecs instead of sneaking off to procure some gold for himself, but you're never quite sure where his



loyalties really lie, which is what makes him such a good character. Anyway, a brilliant show!

### **3. Raven (2002 - present)**

Definitely a fantasy show, this one, with a strong medieval theme, very much like *Knightmare*. Raven has featured in almost every countdown I've done over the past five years, but then that's only to be expected, as it fits into all the categories I've written under. Again, I won't hash over old ground, but I will reaffirm my enthusiasm for this show, and thank CBBC for finally pulling their heads out of their backsides and making a decent children's programme.

### **2. He-Man and the Masters of the Universe (1983 - 1985)**

I had to put this one near the top because it really was my absolute favourite thing in the world when I was very young, which is an honour that was soon supplanted by *Knightmare* and has not changed again in the twenty-one years that have since passed by. He-Man has elements of both sci-fi and fantasy, being set on another planet (Eternia) and containing a lot of paranormal elements, including mythological creatures such as dragons, trolls and manticores, several characters with magical abilities (principally Skeletor, Evil-Lyn, Orko and the Sorceress of Grayskull, but there are plenty of magical guest-stars as well), and of course Prince Adam's ability to transform into the muscle-bound title character when he holds aloft his magic sword and says *By the Power of Grayskull!*

Like *The Mysterious Cities of Gold*, this show had very strong characters and engaging stories, but unlike *The Mysterious Cities of Gold*, it was side-splittingly funny in places and contained stand-alone episodes rather than a thirty-nine part continuous plot, which perhaps made it more accessible for youngsters. *She-Ra Princess of Power* was a spin-off from He-Man and the Masters of the Universe, and was also a very good show, although I've never enjoyed it as much as its parent.

My favourite character is and has always been Skeletor, the main villain, who is one of the few TV characters that can pull off being very funny and very scary at the same time. In *Knightmare*, Lord Fear managed to achieve this effect quite well, but I tend to think that Skeletor is a much more ruthless and effective villain than Lord Fear - you wouldn't catch Skeletor blabbing all his plans to his minions (of which he had plenty) through a spyglass!

### **1. Knightmare (1987 - 1994)**

I doubt if any of you have ever heard of this show, but it used to keep me amused for twenty-five minutes at the end of a long week at school over a period of eight years. A blindfolded kid would wander around a computer-generated Dungeon environment, guided by three friends, in an attempt to complete some kind of quest. The show starred Hugo Myatt as Treguard, the Dungeon Master, whose most prominent feature was his beard, I seem to recall. Knightmare was cancelled in 1994 and I think I was quite upset about it at the time, but to be honest, I've hardly given the show a second thought since then.

## REMEMBER THIS?

Series 2. Level 1.

### THE SWINGING PENDULUM

This is what you might call a one-shot-wonder, although there was nothing particularly wonderful about it, it has to be said. One of Stuart's challenges on level one was to run past a huge swinging pendulum, which looked a lot like a wrecker's ball, in the corridor that usually housed the Hall of Spears. The pendulum was seemingly transparent, as we could see the distorted details of the room through it as it swung back and forth. The challenge was only used for this one single appearance in the programme, although it did feature as the backdrop for the end credits in the same episode.

Upon arriving in the corridor through the left-hand door nearest the camera, it became quite clear what Stuart had to do. The door directly opposite him had the symbol of the Chalice (the object of his quest) emblazoned beneath it, and the swinging pendulum would pause between swings just long enough for Stuart to run directly across the corridor and out through the door. The team succeeded in completing this task with no problems, which was not surprising as, although the task seemed overwhelming at first, it really wasn't very difficult at all.

Interestingly enough, when Stuart first entered the room, Treguard remarked that *"a new threat guards the Great Corridor of the Catacombs"* yet it was painfully clear to anyone with a fragment of Knightmare nous that this was not, in fact, the Great Corridor of the Catacombs at all! Treguard's comment that *"we don't want Stuart mashed"* was rather nice, though, and said with great relish by Hugo Myatt. The challenge was never presented to any team other than Stuart's, which was a shame in a way, as it could have provided some hairy moments. Still, I haven't lost any sleep about it over the past twenty years, and I don't intend to start now, I'm sure you'll be relieved to hear.

Of course, the prospect of a much more nerve-wracking, challenging swinging pendulum room was dangled in front of our noses at the end of the first episode of series 4, as the chamber behind the end credits contained a fiendish challenge that seemed to involve walking along a narrow, jagged path whilst dodging a large pendulum that was swinging with a circular motion at quite a speed. It's not surprising that this



challenge never made it into the show, as it was obviously far too hard, although there did seem to be a safe spot in the middle of the path. Still, it undoubtedly would have been too much for any team to handle.

**Difficulty: 3** Despite first appearances, it was a simple bit of timing.

**Killer Instinct: 1** No real opportunity, no real hope.

**Gore Factor: 10** Undoubtedly it would have been very messy indeed!

**Fairness: 8** Likely to unnerve the poor little darlings on level one, but not finish them off.

## ADVENTURE TIME

**As the never-ending journey continues, the Dungeon leads 14-6. Dan has just landed in level two, where his adventure now continues.**

Dan is in a blue cave that contains a raised blue platform. On the platform sits a bottle of green glass.

"Well, team, you know what curiosity did to the cat, but I don't think that particular moggy was questing in my Dungeon at the time," Treguard chuckles. "If your quest should fail because hesitation and indecision cause you miss a vital clue, you'll have no one to blame but yourselves."

The team decide that Treguard is telling them to open the bottle, so they instruct Dan to do this. As Dan uncorks the stopper, a flash of lightning occurs and a large, transparent image of Merlin appears in the room.

"Ah, you have found my little calling card, dungeoneer," the wizard's voice says distantly. "Jolly good for you. This is only my image, of course. If you want to reach level three, you'll have to find me in person!"

"How do I do that?" asks Dan.

"Just follow your nose, of course," Merlin replies. "You will find, however, that I am not as easy to reach as you might think; magic will be required, I'm afraid. I myself cannot give you any at present, but there is one vital piece of information I have for you: the third step is the clap..."

Merlin's voice becomes fainter as his image begins to fade away, but the advisors manage to hear the third step. It is obvious that nothing further can be achieved in this chamber, so Dan is directed out, into Merlin's somewhat unstable throne room.

"Hmm, well I can't imagine that finding Merlin is going to be that easy this time," Treguard considers. "However, the usual challenge is still presenting itself to you, team, and you should know by now what steps you must take to complete it."

Dan crawls on the floor, summoning the first step. He then shuffles forward on his hands and knees, summoning the second. Finally, he rises to his feet and brings his hands together in a loud clap. The third step appears, and Dan reaches the magic symbol. There is a thunderous crash, a flash of lightning, and Hordriss appears on the throne.

"...really do think that duties such as this are beneath one..." he is in the middle of saying to someone, but he stops speaking when he realises what has happened. "Ah, yes, greetings, young dungeoneer. I am Hordriss the Confuser, as I'm sure you already know, and I am here to administer your test. I seek two truths from you, and I must have both if you are to earn

the use of one of my awesomely powerful spells..."

"Do get on with it, Hordriss," Treguard yawns with mock boredom. "We haven't got all day, you know."

"Very well," Hordriss mumbles sulkily. "Right then, Dan, here is my first. I give life to all, but in large volumes I can bring death and destruction. In my purest form, I am completely without colour or odour. What am I?" The team commence their whispered discussion, and soon manage to come up with an answer.

"Water," says Dan.

"Truth accepted," Hordriss replies. "Here is my second. I come from beneath the earth, but when I visit humans they run in fear. I am always hungry, and I'll eat almost anything. My red anger can be easily detected. What am I?"

The advisors are fairly sure of their answer, although Dan is not convinced. However, at a loss for anything else to say, he relays it to Hordriss.

"Fire," Dan says uncertainly.

"Falsehood," Hordriss tuts. "Lava was the truth I sought. Well, you blew that one, didn't you, if you'll pardon the pun. Now you'll have to carry on without my magical aid. I wouldn't rate your chances, but there we are. Farewell, then."

Hordriss disappears in another magical flash. Dejectedly, the advisors direct Dan out of the room.

He emerges into a wooden-vaulted cave, where a figure in red and yellow is standing perfectly still in the middle of the chamber, his arms and legs arranged in an intricate pose.

"Come now, Motley, we all know that statuesque poses are not your particular forte," Treguard chuckles, "although I've never been sure what actually is, of course. Anyway, cease this foolishness, and get on with what you've been told to do."

"All right then, guv," Motley agrees, shaking himself and resuming his normal stance. "Just thought I'd try something a bit different for a change, but it don't half give you cramp! Hello, Helmet Head. What's your garb, then?"

"Dan," comes the reply.

"Well, you know, Dan, I haven't had a fresh joke in my act for years," Motley sighs wistfully. "I guess that's why no one listens to it anymore. Anyway, you tell me a joke I haven't heard before, and I'll make it worth your while."

"All right," Dan agrees. "Why did the golfer take two pairs of socks to

the golf course?"

"Er, I dunno," Motley puzzles, scratching his head.

"In case he got a hole in one," Dan grins widely.

"Ooh, terrible," Motley winces. "Still, it's better than anything I've got at the moment, so I suppose it'll do. All right then, Dan, I gift you with the spell RUBBLE. This will allow you to gain entry to the mining tunnel, where Merlin is waiting for you. Hmm, well, that's assuming you get that far, of course. See ya!"

With that, Motley skips out of the cave. The advisors direct Dan out, feeling in higher spirits now, but these are soon dampened when they see which chamber their dungeoneer has arrived in.

There is a colossal face on the far wall, with writhing snakes growing out of its scalp in place of hair.

"Extreme warning, team!" Treguard exclaims. "This is Medusa, and Dan needs some form of protection against her stare if he is to avoid being turned into stone... but of course, you haven't any!"

There is a grating sound as Dan's entire body transforms into stone. The screen turns black, and the Dungeon bell tolls once more.

"Ooh, nasty!" Treguard grins with relish. "It looks like you won't be making your way through to Merlin now, team. You needed Hordriss's magic to freeze Medusa's stare, but you just weren't bright enough when it came to the crunch. Still, Dan should be flesh and bone once more when you meet up with him, though I can't guarantee it. If he's still a statue, perhaps you can try out that RUBBLE spell on him and see what happens. Spellcasting: D-I-S-M-I-S-S!"

**Will the next dungeoneer to answer the Nightmare challenge prove more adept than Dan and co? Read the next Adventure Time to find out.**

# KIDS' TV SHOWS I GREW UP WITH

By Liam Callaghan

## MAINSTAYS

In the previous three articles, covering action cartoons, comic cartoons and literary adaptations, I have been sticking largely to series from around the time of my own childhood, in the 1980s and early '90s. They were, after all, my formative years - I was born in 1982, and the bulk of my experience of children's television dates from about 1985 to 1995. However, children's television has been around for a whole lot longer than I have, and it would be foolish not to take the time to look at those mainstays of children's TV and film that have been around since before my parents' time. So here is the fourth and final section of my article - children's TV mainstays.

## Disney

What would the world be like if Walt Disney had not been born in 1901? The first animated film of any description was actually made in 1906, but it may well have just become a brief fad, had not Walt and his brother established their animation studio in 1923, five years before releasing the first (short, black & white) cartoon featuring the most enduring icon of animation, Mickey Mouse. Ten years after that, in 1938, came *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the world's first feature-length animation, in glorious Technicolor. Since then, the animation industry has just grown and grown, with Disney spearheading the format over the years with such legendary animated classics such as *Pinocchio*, *Dumbo*, *Bambi* and *Peter Pan*, to name but a few. I'm not sure if I've ever read the original tales, although I have heard that in some cases (especially more recently), they have deviated from the original storylines somewhat. The relative innocence of these tales has kept them from dating, and thanks to DVDs, their enduring popularity among succeeding generations of young children is assured.

And of course, the '80s heralded many Disney cartoon shows with memorable characters and theme tunes, most notably *Duck Tales* (I still get a kick out of that theme tune even now), but also *Gummi Bears* (probably my second favourite of the Disney bunch from this era), *TaleSpin*, *Chip and Dale Rescue Rangers*, and I'm not sure what else! Granted, not everything they touched turned to gold - the less said about the series they made of *Winnie the Pooh*, the better - but as long as the genre of children's entertainment exists, it's a foregone conclusion that

Disney will be in the vanguard.

### **Warner Brothers**

The other godfather of comic animation, Warner Brothers were the talent behind Bugs Bunny & co. Where would we be, I wonder, without catchphrases such as "What's up, doc?" or "That's all, folks!" as made famous by Bugs and the stuttering Porky Pig. Curiously, thinking about it now, it occurs to me that a large number of their characters seemed to have speech impediments of some sort or other - aside from Porky's stutter, I seem to recall Daffy Duck had a lisp, and most notably, Foghorn Leghorn had a different sort of stammer, with whole words - "What, I say what's goin' on here?" etc. Now, I haven't seen these in a long time, except for three or four that I have as bonus features on the DVDs of classic films such as Casablanca and The Adventures of Robin Hood (from 1938, starring Errol Flynn - if you've never seen this you don't know what you're missing). But some of those ones are actually rather clever - such as "Carrotblanca", which puts Bugs Bunny in Humphrey Bogart's shoes, with just about the entire WB cartoon cast as the other characters from the movie, cramming the entire storyline into a mere ten minutes.

Then there were the ones with Wile E. Coyote's ill-fated attempts to catch the Road Runner, which conveyed the entire storyline without a single word of dialogue, save for Road Runner's catchphrase, "Beep-Beep!", all to that same wonderfully comic, fast-paced theme tune. Probably not something I'd go out of my way to watch again as an adult, but I'd certainly have a look if they came on again - and in any case, they were enjoyable enough as a child. And that's what cartoons are for, really; if they are clever or well written enough to enjoy as an adult, that's a bonus. And considering that, like Disney, Warner Brothers have been making cartoons since before my parents' time and will doubtless still be doing so when I have children of my own, I think it's safe to say that the appeal of their cartoons is not limited simply to their target audience, and their enduring popularity is guaranteed as long as there is a demand for cartoons.

### **Hanna-Barbera**

Another collection of historical greats here, dating back to the 1950s. William Hanna and Joseph Barbera were, I believe, the first people to start creating cartoons specifically as television series. As such, these shows have tended to be repeated more closely together than the various

Disney and Warner Brothers cartoons, which despite having recurring characters, were made individually rather than as series. This made for more instantly memorable recurring themes, such as Yogi Bear's fondness for stealing picnic baskets, to the chagrin of Ranger Smith, and Top Cat's hare-brained schemes, which would frequently harass Officer Dibble to a similar extent. Perhaps even more famous among children of all generations, though, is Scooby Doo, which has had perhaps more incarnations on screen than any other cartoon - different scenarios, different combinations of characters, but always on the trail of a ghost who turned out to be a guy in a costume, a fact which was parodied in the live-action feature film outing a few years ago, along with every idiosyncrasy the show had to offer.

Other Hanna-Barbera shows included Huckleberry Hound, Quick-Draw McGraw, Deputy Dawg, Touché Turtle, The Smurfs, and of course Dick Dastardly and Muttley in their various guises - trying to cheat to win the Wacky Races (typically by placing Penelope Pit-Stop in danger), or their hare-brained schemes to Stop the Pigeon. But of course, the best remembered of their shows has to be The Flintstones; Yabba-Dabba-Doo became one of the most memorable catchphrases of the cartoon world, and the influence of the series is still felt today - Fred Flintstone is arguably the prototype All-American-Husband on which the likes of Homer Simpson are based.

Another noteworthy point is that shows such as The Flintstones and Top Cat were, I think, the first cartoons to specifically have a theme song, rather than just an instrumental piece to signal what show was on (The Flintstones being the more memorable of the two) and while the style of the song has dated somewhat since its initial broadcast something like half a century ago, the song is still firmly affixed in the memory of many a person who heard or even sang along to it as a child, myself included. Of course, its popularity among young children was ensured by the inclusion of dinosaurs alongside the human cast, despite the fact that the dinosaurs became extinct all of sixty million years before humans first evolved. We know this, and we don't care, because it makes for a fun show.

### **Tom and Jerry (MGM)**

So far as I know, MGM stuck to the same two animated stars. There were plenty of variations on the theme, but the format was the same, with the cat always trying to catch the mouse and never succeeding,

unless Jerry let him - one I remember specifically was when Tom was thrown out of the house because he couldn't catch a mouse, and Jerry realised it was no fun without him, so they engineered a plan whereby Tom could "catch" Jerry in front of his owner, thus restoring her faith in her cat's abilities, and in return they could exist reasonably amicably, putting on the show every so often. Sometimes Jerry had help from a dog, known alternatively as Spike or Butch, but whatever he was called, Tom was terrified of him.

Actually, Tom and Jerry are probably the most name-checked cartoon characters ever - certainly they gained great fame for the violence of their antics, and have often been (needlessly) cited as a potential bad influence on children. This is political correctness gone too far! If you're looking for a subtler joke about these cartoons, you have to look to Red Dwarf, in which the Cat says, "I know this game, it's called Cat and Mouse. And there's only one way to win - don't be the mouse! The mouse never wins, unless you believe those lying cartoons!" What better immortalisation could they ask for?

### **The Muppets**

Created by the late, great Jim Henson, Kermit, Miss Piggy et al recently celebrated their fiftieth anniversary. After originally scoring a hit children's programme over here (more successful than in America, but then that's probably because of the difference in humour between our two nations), these hybrids of marionettes and puppets (hence the name - after all, the alternative, parionette, is a bit of a mouthful) subsequently accumulated great success with a variety of films.

While I'm not familiar with the early films, I have seen some of the more recent adaptations, which pay homage to famous literary works, and I must confess to a particular fondness for their take on A Christmas Carol - save a few additions to accommodate all the characters, it's a very faithful telling of the tale. Indeed, while some of the details in Treasure Island and The Wizard of Oz, for instance, have been sanitised for the younger audience, or adjusted to suit either the Muppet characters (Miss Piggy as Benjamina Gunn opposite Kermit's Captain Smollett) or the human guest stars (Ashanti as Dorothy dreaming of being a singer), the plotlines are basically the same as the original books - making the Muppets possibly the last refuge for faithful(ish) film adaptations!

These were the most sophisticated puppet characters of their time



(which is no slight to Gerry Anderson's shows such as Thunderbirds by any means), and they also appealed to adults - from snippets I've seen of the Muppets in their heyday, there were certainly jokes that a grown-up audience would get that would be completely lost on the children. As I understand it, this is the same premise that has been used to considerable success more recently by The Simpsons.

### **Blue Peter**

Another show that's approaching the half-century mark, Blue Peter has been a British television institution since 1958, and is responsible for the catchphrase, "here's one I made earlier". Of course, the days of children making things out of everyday household objects are sadly a thing of the past (bring back Bitsa, I say!) but the format of the show in general seems to have remained the same. Mind you, having watched a few recent episodes, it does seem that the presenters are trying more to be "with it" than "educational". Still, the appeals are as active as ever - the team will ask the public to donate a particular item for a good cause. The latest one doing the rounds is "the disc drive" - donating unwanted CDs, DVDs and games for Barnardo's. This sort of thing has been going on for a long time; they always ask for a particular item to be donated, never for money, and there is something rather charming about it. It almost feels as if the children can work magic with an innocent household object!

The other great tradition is the pets - since the phone-in scandal, they've been somewhat overstocked with pets, now with two dogs and two cats! The other most prominent feature on this show is that the presenters routinely engage in challenges and learn to do things, recent ones ranging from swamp football to steam-train driving! So at least it's still putting ideas in children's minds, and that is to be encouraged.

### **Newsround**

A permanent fixture on children's television for thirty-six years now, this has possibly been invaluable in getting children to take an interest in current affairs. It's had a variety of presenters over the years, and it's been a long time since I could have named any of the current team, but the iconic image of this series has to be John Craven. I remember once playing a board game with my dad, and the question came up, "who is the presenter of Newsround?" - to which I said, "I don't know who presents it nowadays, but the answer on the card is John Craven." As he would have had even less idea of whom the presenter was at that time, and I had given him the answer on the card, he accepted my statement.

From what I have seen of the show in more recent times, it is considerably glossier than it was in my youth, with a distinct celebrity focus, but I think that's really just a sign of the times - everything comes with ten times as many bells and whistles as it used to. CBBC is breeding a race of *Hello magazine* readers! But at least the programme is being informative to some degree, and that can't be all bad.

### **ChuckleVision**

Going pretty much continuously since the mid-80s, this is basically a sitcom, whose influences lie heavily with the old circus clowns and mime acts going all the way back to Charlie Chaplin. Is there anyone of a certain age who, when they hear builders or removal people saying, "To me! To you!", doesn't think of the Chuckle Brothers? Having seen a few recent episodes of late, I have noticed a slight expansion of the cast (the main focus of the show is still on Paul and Barry, but there are more guest characters now than there used to be) and I think that probably detracts from it a little bit. Retrospectively, I have to admit, this is not especially my cup of tea, but I enjoyed it enough at the time. And certainly, to have kept going like that for two decades does take some doing, so credit to them.

To sum up, it almost goes without saying that for all these shows to have gone on for as long as they have is a sure sign of quality. Of course none of them are quite the same as they were when they first began, and in some cases that's not always a good thing, but then nothing stays the same for that long a period - insert cliché of your choice here! We all have our own different memories of these shows, and so do so many other generations of fans. You can almost tell how old someone is by their choice of Blue Peter presenters! And who can truthfully claim never to have sat in front of the telly and lapped up a Bugs Bunny or a Mickey Mouse cartoon?

Of course we mustn't forget the mainstays of yesteryear, no longer running, such as the various art programmes, like *Take Hart* and *Hart Beat*, presented by the wonderful Tony Hart, who must have taught countless young children (including myself) to draw; or shows like *How*, and its sequel, *How 2*, both presented by Fred Dinenage (with a variety of co-hosts over the years), which between them answered all sorts of weird and wonderful questions for several decades. Or indeed our own *Knightmare*! Eight years is a very respectable run, however you look at it.

Likewise, in various settings, from a school to a theme park to a city apartment, Bodger and Badger ran for about a decade, chronicling the misadventures of handyman Simon Bodger, played by ventriloquist Andy Cunningham, along with his sidekick Badger, who would cause all varieties of mischief, often involving instant mashed potato.

Then there are the evergreens like Gerry Anderson's various series, especially Thunderbirds - not such a "long-running" programme in the sense of new episodes being made over a long period, but the thirty-two that were made are dusted down every so often to appeal to a fresh audience - which it never fails to do. Who can forget the time when Blue Peter showed us all how to make our own Tracy Island, and were inundated with so many requests for the instruction sheet that they ran out and had to keep reprinting it!

However much the long-running shows may change, almost inevitably for the worse eventually, it's impossible to become completely disillusioned about them. Somewhere, in some deep dark recess of the mind of anyone of a certain age, lurks a memory of these programmes that will still make you smile, and keep on smiling no matter what. Here's to longevity!

**I certainly echo that sentiment, Liam, with the online version of TES now approaching its seventh birthday. Hmm, I seem to remember setting myself the task of choosing a personal favourite from the shows you've mentioned. I have many fond memories of watching a Sunday morning segment on ITV called The Disney Club, which used to feature Chip and Dale Rescue Rangers, Gummi Bears and a live-action show called Teen Angel, but I think my absolute favourite offering that you've mentioned has to be The Muppet Christmas Carol - an absolutely brilliant film, parts of which I still can't watch without blubbing!**

## PUZZLE PAGE ONE

### I Think I Read Somewhere...

All these quotes come from the Knightmare book series. Some of them are paraphrased for expediency. Which character is speaking in each case, and from which book is the quote taken?

- 1.) "Even when things are in plain sight, they're not always clear."
- 2.) "Flesh is flesh and meat is meat, human or elephant, I must eat."
- 3.) "Did you really used to drink with Shakespeare?"
- 4.) "Treguard has escaped from your *unbreakable* mirror. Obviously our definitions of the word vary."
- 5.) "Perhaps later I will give him your face, Treguard."
- 6.) "I can never return home. My place is with the elves."
- 7.) "Gold and frankincense - two of the gifts of the Magi. If we can find myrrh also, I shall count it as a good omen."
- 8.) "That's Prince Osric. I'd rip down all my pop-star pinups to make room for him."
- 9.) "If only he knew..."
- 10.) "Mortals, you have entered my realm. This is the underworld."
- 11.) "Easy to be noble when one is a king."
- 12.) "Do not presume to give me orders, Saxon."

## CLASSIC QUEST

### Series 7

**Quest:** The Shield.

**Dungeoneer:** Naila Kahn.

**Advisors:** Aquila, Asmita and Samreen.

**Home town:** London.

**Team score:** 5 out of 10.

This was a fairly average attempt, but the team certainly had a lot of enthusiasm, and approached their quest with just the right amount of light-heartedness.

**Level One:** Naila meets Brother Strange in the dwarf tunnels. The mysterious monk warns her that Sylvester Hands is lurking somewhere in level one, but he is in disguise. Naila then finds herself in the Crazy Heifer, where Marta sits her down at a table and then goes off to think about what kind of helpful information she might be able to offer. At this point, Sylvester Hands enters the inn, disguised (very poorly) as a troubadour. After sneezing all over an unfortunate customer and ordering a tankard of beer from Marta, Hands sits down with Naila and tells her that he is on the lookout for dungeoneers to kidnap, but he knows that she herself is not one because she is wearing the wrong helmet. Hands gives Naila a horn with which to call him if she comes across any dungeoneers, and then leaves.

Marta then rejoins Naila, and demands to know something from her in exchange for some useful information. Naila explains that the troubadour was Hands in disguise, and Marta tells her that she will need to procure a firestone from Grimaldine in order to pay Smirkenorff for a flight to level two. Naila next travels to the area of level one known as Grimdale, where she finds a bag of silver on a table. This is used to pay Rothberry for a *True Sight* potion, which is utilised to help Naila get past a giant troll with a swinging club.

Through a spyglass, Naila sees Grimaldine threatening Lord Fear with an invasion if he does not return the Brollachan. Fear pretends to be unmoved by Grimaldine's threats, but once the green wizard reveals his plan to capture one of Fear's servants and pump him for knowledge, Lord Fear is clearly somewhat rattled. He tells Lissard to remove all members of the Opposition from level one, which makes the team realise that the

horn they have been given might prove very useful to Grimaldine. In the final chamber of level one, Naila is fortunate enough to run into the green wizard himself, who readily parts with a firestone in return for the horn that will call Sylvester Hands. The large metal door to Smirkenorff opens, and Naila is able to pay the dragon with the firestone for a flight to level two.

**Level Two:** Naila comes across a collection of clue objects in the Rift of Angar. She picks up a glow-light and a talking book of spells, which is apparently playing host to a bookworm, rejecting a bar of gold. Deeper into level two, Naila is accosted by Raptor and his goblins. The bookworm finds a spell called BOLT, which causes a crossbow to appear and shoot fireballs at Raptor and the goblins until they run away.

Next, Naila meets the Brollachan, who is on the lookout for knowledge as usual. The advisors tell Naila to ask the book for knowledge, which is not the best idea, as it is a spell book after all, and Naila manages to drown out most of the Brollachan's first question. However, they manage to answer all three questions correctly in the end, and the Brollachan is satisfied.

In a darkened dwarf tunnel, the glow-light is utilised, and Naila comes across a spyglass, which she makes use of. Lord Fear is talking to Hands in the magic pool. Hands is covered in green slime, which was apparently Grimaldine's punishment for his inability to remember any useful information about harming Lord Fear. Fear gloats and laughs at Hands in his usual way, before telling him the combination for the Trial by Spikes.

It is not long before Naila reaches this deadly obstacle, and it is here that the advisors' dithering and somewhat panicky tendencies (which have shown themselves before a couple of times) really come to the fore. They do a very poor job of trying to direct Naila across the correct number of squares; they even begin by asking her to take a certain number of steps instead! They do eventually get the idea, but they are in a right mess by now, and Naila is soon directed backwards into a spike.

—  
**Summary:** A fair attempt, but their indecisiveness (and slight ditziness) did for them in the end.

# THE STRANGENESS OF THE WALLS

By Ian Down

Kevin landed in a bland room - oddly, it was clearly a clue room. There was a table with objects and just sufficient time to take the necessary food to restore life force, this time an apple, before slowly, inevitably, Granitas emerged.

"Concentrate, team, this monster doesn't usually inhabit this level. Something odd may be going on," said Treguard with a puzzled look.

"I am Granitas of Legend," the wall monster declared pompously. (The team inevitably sniggered at its name, but were still wary of what it would ask of them.) "The truth I shall have or you shall inevitably meet your doom. Three riddles have I, and three answers I demand. Here is my first. What can you put in a barrel of water to make it lighter?"

The team looked puzzled.

"A gas lighter than air?" suggested Alice.

"Can't be, there's lots of gasses lighter than air," Robert was convinced.

"I know, what about a hole? That would make it lighter eventually!" John was guessing.

"Say *a hole*, Kevin," Alice ordered.

"Truth accepted. Here is my second. I have rivers with no water, forests with no trees and towns with no houses. What am I?"

The team looked truly stumped. John guessed, "A desert?"

"Falsehood! A map was the answer I sought. Here is my third. I have ten men's length and ten men's strength, yet a young boy can lift and carry me in one hand. What am I?"

"I think it's a rope," said Alice confidently. The team agreed and Kevin gave the answer.

"Truth accepted. Two is the score, you may know more. Weaponry will be

of no use to you for the rest of your quest. Select the right colour and you may appease the witches. Now, I sleep."

Granitas faded back into the stone. Kevin examined all the items: a large axe, a string of orange beads, a scroll, a tiara and a wooden key.

"Read the scroll, Kevin," Alice demanded.

He fumbled with the rolled up manuscript until it was the right way up: "Obedience may be an erstwhile friend, until a spell that brings Her to an end."

"There's no spell here. Should we take the tiara for vanity's sake?" suggested Alice.

"How about the orange beads? They could be witch amber," said John hopefully.

The team agreed on the tiara and the orange beads and began to move towards the doorway. At that moment, Lord Fear suddenly appeared and spoke to Treguard in a booming voice and deathly mocking tones.

"So, Treguard, your minion still survives, I see." Here he paused. "But not for much longer!"

"What wickedness have you blighted my Dungeon with now, Fear?" Treguard demanded.

"Oh, let's just say walls have ears," Fear whispered, "not to mention a new master. Oh, I just did mention it! Never mind. Anyway, even though this team is strong, I doubt they can handle *that woman*, added to which I can stop them anyway by sabotaging any Dungeon wall. Genius, even if I say so myself. Oh, I just did! Never mind."

And with that, the apparition left with a sickening cackle. Treguard showed great concern.

"It seems you have very great trouble ahead, team," he remarked. "The fabric of the Dungeon itself may be in the thrall of Lord Fear."

They continued with trepidation into the next room, which revealed a



large woman brandishing a very large sword.

"Introduce yourself, Kevin," ordered Alice, "and be polite, this may be the powerful one."

"I am Kevin, Your Ladyship, a humble dungeoneer on a quest for the Cup," he said reverently, and bowed his head.

The swordswoman barely noticed him as she continued slashing away.

"Well you're a bit of a pipsqueak, aren't you?" Gundrada grinned. "Don't fancy your chances in the Dungeon much, especially if you're going to be so grovelling. I am Gundrada the Sword Mistress."

"Can you help us in our quest, please?" Kevin squeaked.

"Why should I help you? I could chop you in half right here and now, just to check that my blade's still sharp," she laughed, as she swished her sword.

Kevin thought quickly and said, "Apparently there is a female warrior in the lower levels reputed to be an even greater swordswoman than you. We may be able to take you to her."

"Impossible," said Gundrada, clearly in a huff. "But on the off-chance that your information is correct, I shall accompany you. In any case, a tiny little piece of bandit-fodder like you wouldn't last five minutes alone in this part of the castle."

As they moved onward, the castle opened up into a grassy courtyard that was surrounded by walls on three sides. Immediately the sound of horns could be heard.

"Caution, team," urged Treguard. "For some reason, goblins are hunting in this area."

Almost immediately, three goblins appeared, attacking from all angles.

"Get back!" ordered Gundrada, almost pushing Kevin into the castle wall. "I'll take care of these!"

With that, she began to slaughter the three attacking goblins. Three dead goblins soon lay at her feet.

"Pah! Only level two goblins, not even hobgoblins! Pathetic, really. Well, come on, there's no time to lose." Gundrada strode forward, dungeoneer in hand, almost dragging him along.

At the other end of the courtyard, they entered a large, majestic, luxurious room with huge columns and a throne perched high upon a set of shiny marble steps. A serene woman sat on the throne. She had a greyish complexion and whitish hair pulled back into a plait, although she did not look old at all. She stepped slowly and grandly down the stairs.

"I am Greystagg, the ruler of Witch Haven." She looked Gundrada up and down. "I do not require the presence of this barbarian woman. Begone, or perish by my magic." Her voice was stern but calm.

Gundrada thought for a second, and then sloped away; she felt rather intimidated and had no defence against Greystagg's magic.

"Who are you and what do you want from me?" Greystagg said, in an aloof tone.

"My name is Kevin and I'm on a quest for the Cup. Will you let us pass?"

"Well, you rather impertinent intruder, do you have anything of value to me that might persuade me to let you pass? Otherwise, of course, you shall perish here."

Alice got excited: "Give her the beads, Kevin, the orange beads!"

Kevin fumbled for a moment and then thrust the beads at Greystagg. Eventually she deigned to receive the object, whereupon her mood patently pacified.

"Ah, witch amber. We haven't seen this amount in months; you must have brought it from an upper level. You have my deepest thanks. I will not only let you pass, I will grant you two spells, and you will certainly need them. It is rumoured that Maldame has become more powerful and is totally dominant in the lower level. A meagre spell I shall grant you is called PHOBIA. A more powerful spell you may wish to reserve for a

greater foe is called MIRROR, and you should use it wisely. You will do all in the Dungeon a favour if you can defeat that demon woman, so I shall also give you a clue to the combination for the causeway. Remember that a root may be useful. The causeway key is as follows: 9, 25, 64, 100, 169. Now, my tolerance for impudent adventurers is short, rather like you. Begone!"

Greystagg ascended to her throne. The team swiftly guided Kevin through the exit and were surprised to find themselves instantly faced with the causeway. The grid had none of the numbers given to them by Greystagg, except the number nine on the front row.

"Should we guide him onto the nine?" suggested John cautiously.

"But then what?" interjected Alice.

"Maybe the numbers will change when we step onto it," John replied uncertainly.

Alice looked at her notes. After some scribbling, she came up with a suggestion.

"Remember what she said about a root being useful," Alice said. "I thought she meant an ingredient for something, but look - all the square roots of the code are there, so maybe we should step on the three!"

They tentatively guided Kevin onto the three, and then breathed a collective sigh of relief when he remained standing. They easily crossed the rest of the correct path - 5, 8, 10 and 13. They had crossed safely but were wary of what was to come. They were venturing into level three with just two enigmatic sounding spells and a tiara. Suddenly they felt unprepared for the last and most difficult level.

"Don't give up yet, team," urged Treguard. "You may still have a chance!"

**Will Kevin survive on the third level, even in the face of Lord Fear's evil machinations and Maldame's increased power? Stay tuned for the fourth chapter of this story to find out.**

## REMEMBER HER?

Series 5. Level 1/2.

### PIXEL

Pixel was a pixie - a pixie with a pricking needle! Her name is actually quite clever, as it plays on the fact that she is a pixie, as well as the way she was created, i.e. with the sort of pixels you find in a computer. These pixels came together to make a short, white female figure, which sported a set of wings and seemed to be carrying a magic wand. Pixel's high, strident and often aggressive voice was provided by Stephanie Hesp, who is of course most famous for bringing to life the strident and often aggressive Elita.

Pixel's main function in the quest was as a kind of weapon - she could be used to get rid of Opposition forces by pricking them with her needle. (Frightknights excepted, of course - how could even the sharpest pixie bite hurt their metal components?) This meant that she would usually be carried as a clue object, either in a box or a bottle, although once she was summoned by magic. The summoning spell in this case was called PIXEL, which is the only Knightmare spell that is also a character's name.

Pixel only made four appearances in Knightmare, but I find them quite memorable, personally. Her function of biting members of the Opposition meant that she would inevitably be given the chance to bite Skarkill or Sylvester Hands, and that's exactly what she did, twice each. Catherine acquired Pixel in a box after making a pact with Hordriss, and then used her to scare off Skarkill and his goblins. Richard then picked her up in a silver bottle (later in the same episode) and used her to terrorise Hands into giving him the password, although Pixel refused to come out until Richard had found some fresh flowers for her to smell. Sarah was the one to call Pixel by magic, acquiring the spell from Merlin's Magic Box. Again, Skarkill was the one on the receiving end of the needle.

Pixel's final appearance came a little later in the series, when Jenna picked her up in a box. She was warned by a scroll not to open the box, which was good advice, as Hands found out when he accosted Jenna and decided to open the box himself, leading to another painful encounter with Pixel. It is possible that Pixel would have been of further use later in the level, as she agreed to accompany Jenna further on her journey, riding in the box. She had previously done the same thing with Catherine,

although Richard and Sarah had not had the option of taking Pixel with them any further after she had helped them out once. Interestingly enough, Catherine and Jenna both proceeded to fall off causeways whilst still carrying Pixel, although obviously this did the little pixie no harm, what with her wings and all.

So, despite her somewhat forgettable nature, I quite like Pixel and I find her scenes enjoyable, although obviously there was very little variety that could be injected into them. Pixel was never likely to be more than a one-series-wonder, but she added another entry to Knightmare's list of featured magical creatures, and she provided some fun moments.

**Fear Factor: 6** Ready to bite anyone she didn't like, including dungeoneers.

**Killer Instinct: 1** Painful jabs, but hardly fatal even to goblins.

**Humour Rating: 2** Made up a funny rhyme about biting Skarkill for Sarah.

**Oscar Standard: 8** The voice was very appropriate to the role, although it gave Pixel quite a similar character to Elita.

## KNIGHTMARE LOCATIONS

Bodiam Castle, Hastings, East Sussex

### **Bodiam Castle. Vital Statistics:**

**Location:** Bodiam, near Hastings, East Sussex.

**Century of Origin:** 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Also Known As:** Various Dungeon rooms new to series 5.

**Series featured in:** 5, 6 and 7.

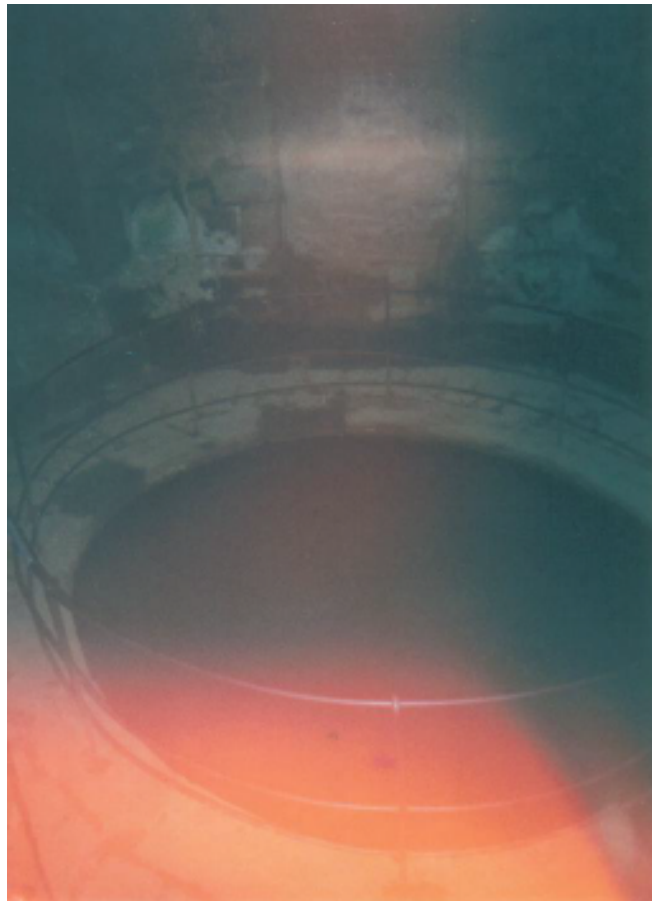
These pictures were taken by me, Jake Collins, and scanned by Rosey Collins, in October 2006.

The chamber below was frequently used throughout series 5, 6 and 7 in many different situations.



Below is a close-up of the doors and window in this chamber - it's hard to believe that Brollachan isn't about to appear on the wall!

Finally, we have a shot of the wellway that lies beyond the open door, as seen in an eye shield sequence.



**Next Issue:** Our final visit to Bodiam Castle.

## IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME TRUE...

By Jim Waterman

Throughout my life people have always said I have a great memory. Some evidence suggests they might have had a point, whether it concerned what I was supposed to be learning at school and far beyond, Formula One statistics, or useless bits of knowledge such as the Russian word for refrigerator (that's холодильник, by the way). Old kids' TV programmes that I watched as a nipper have always had a habit of sticking with me, which is why I was able to fill in bits and pieces of information about Treasures of the Mindlord for UKgameshows.com; it seems everyone bar me had forgotten about it. This show, made by TSW in 1986, was not far short of being a predecessor to Nightmare, and so after enjoying it during its brief run, it came as no surprise that I took to Nightmare like swords to a goblin right from day one.

I saw every episode of series one and two (bar one) when they were first broadcast, hence my memories of these two series were set in stone. Series three was rather rockier. In September 1989 I started at a new school, where the day ended at 5:40pm on a Friday, and although they say small kids operate VCR timers better than any adult, relying on my seven-year-old brother to record Nightmare wasn't always a success. I saw some of series three, but by no means all of it.

As for the rest... it had been impressed on me by my parents and teachers over my first year at the new school, during which I was the grand old age of ten, that I was now swimming with the big fish. From this point onwards, entirely by my own decision, facts and facts only were what I would deal with; I equated facts with being mature, and imagination as anything but. Whatever did not fit with this self-imposed totalitarian regime of constant intelligence and maturity was brutally put to the sword - that vivid imagination that had been what I lived for during my first decade was well and truly trounced, and kids' TV was always going to be one of the first casualties, although The Crystal Maze was still given the green light as it was on at 6:30pm on Channel 4 rather than 4:40pm on CITV. This made all the difference.

So there was no longer room for Nightmare in my New World Order. No longer did I bother asking my brother to record it, even though occasionally he would, and in all I saw snippets of series four, but no more. All I remembered from that series were the bits of forest, the



eye shield sequences, the Corridor of Blades, the rounded skull ghosts - and in particular a scene involving two of them. As I later found out, this was in the final episode of the series, shown after the end of term.

Series five I saw probably one clip of, involving blue fire - unsurprisingly this also turned out to be the final episode; and I must have seen at least one scene of series six or seven, as I remembered the walking knight life force clock. But only just. Equally, a brief flash of the life force pie was my only original memory of series eight, which I definitely remember *nothing* else of from first time round.

Should I have put aside my newly-formed prejudices against kids' TV which I had forcibly consigned to the scrap heap before I was old enough to be a contestant on Nightmare? My first week at Trinity Hall, Cambridge - in which I met a certain Ben Lowings, the caped crusader of series five - suggests Nightmare and being intelligent could quite easily have co-existed peacefully. But it was not to be at the time, and now I present the fallout from that unnecessarily difficult period - my "mistaken memories" - which, not entirely surprisingly, is centred on series four.

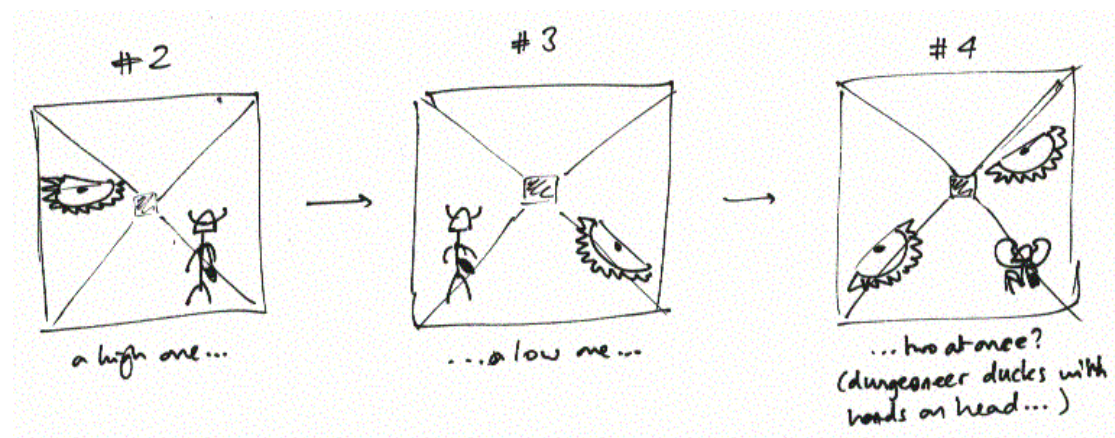
### **1) The amazing jumping skull ghost:**

As I remembered it, as one of the dungeoneers was walking through a castle during an eye shield sequence, a skull ghost jumped out from the left side of the screen, made a loud *bzzaarrrp* noise - similar to what would accompany the destructors of series two, or the appearance of Ariadne - then disappeared back towards the side of the screen. During the Challenge repeats of series four and five I was always watching like a hawk, trying to spot this all-too-brief skull ghost sequence. The reality finally revealed itself in the penultimate episode of series five; shortly after what had been a flower seller's stall earlier in the series, during an eye shield sequence a pooka jumped out from the right side of the screen, made a brief wailing noise identical to what accompanied the skull ghosts in that series, and disappeared back towards the side of the screen, to the sound of a gasp from Pickle.

### **2) A rather more difficult Corridor of Blades:**

The Corridor of Blades was, I thought, one of my stronger memories from series four, but even that did not escape the notorious brain-clouding effects of time. As I remembered it, there would usually be three or four blade sequences, starting with a high one, a low one, a low

one on the other side, maybe another high one, and then, just as they might be getting complacent... two at once, forcing the dungeoneer to move and duck as well. Presented in glorious Stick-o-vision:



Challenge to the rescue again! I watched right through series four to eight, and saw (no pun intended) every Corridor of Blades sequence. And at no point was there ever more than one blade at a time. I can think of only one reason why I ever had the impression that two blades approached at once, and it is Giles's quest at the end of series four - in the same episode where I noticed the two skull ghosts crossing the entrance to the corridor, and in which Giles ducked down very low to avoid the high blades. It seems this final episode of series four is where most of my memories of that series, both true and false (false and true... I'll stop now), were forged.

### 3) The mark two and three life force clocks:

I saw so little of the later series first time round, it's a wonder I remember any of it at all, let alone a scene involving the second life force clock, especially as it appeared so rarely and had so little bearing on the quest by this time. From those severely hazy memories I remember it as being a two-stage clock like the old one, in that first the armour would fall off, leaving a clothed but unarmoured knight underneath, then the flesh would fall off, taking pieces of clothes with it, à la condition amber. The reality, as we all know, was very different - the skeleton was directly underneath the armour. This has led me to a further mistaken impression about this life force clock, but that is a lengthier story for another article!

Common opinion around long-time Knightmare fans is that the less said about series eight's pie, the better. But that too remains responsible for a mistaken memory - namely, that the disappearance of each section of

the pie as the clock ran out was accompanied by a noticeable chomping noise. This time I am genuinely stumped as to where this memory came from, as the only sound associated with the third life force clock is a high-pitched ping as it returns to a whole pie. If my memory isn't playing further tricks on me now, you have to go right the way back to series four and an unfortunate end to a quest in Ariadne's lair to find any chomping noises at all... (I've checked the memorable scene in series five where the blocker eats Chris, and there's a gulp, but nothing else!)

#### **4) Wall Monsters:**

I have one more very minor mistaken memory: before discovering the Nightmare website (well before seeing any of the Challenge repeats) I thought Olgarth and Granitas were the series one and two wall monsters and were joined by Igneous for series 3. I'd completely missed Golgarach and Brangwen the first time round and it was quite a surprise to see that they'd taken over.

## PUZZLE PAGE TWO

### I Think I Read Somewhere...

All these quotes come from the quest sections of the Knightmare book series. Some of them are paraphrased for expediency. Which character is speaking in each case, and from which book's quest section is the quote taken?

13.) "Hoarfrost and Hellspawn, I cannot see a thing!"

14.) "So long as you don't tell the guv'nor, I'll let you have 'em on credit."

15.) "Nor do I wear a velvet coat like some Norman fop!"

16.) "Ah, your pardon. Tobias explained these matters to me."

17.) "If you's a yewman, you can answer my riddle."

18.) "May God and His favourite angel both bless you, kind adventurer."

19.) "Are you, by any chance, the front end of a donkey?"

20.) "A scrawny fellow such as yourself might manage it."

21.) "The riddle I shall ask is a clue to the path you must take."

22.) "You have completed this adventure, and have truly earned your spurs."

23.) "It puts me in mind of that mousy little wench Eve, may devils toast her skinny bones."

24.) "Two times out of three you were correct. As promised, the reward is freedom."

# DUNGEONEER DWELLINGS

Series 7



# THE FASTEST DRAW IN THE DUNGEON

By Ricky Temple

Back in the here and now, Rio shut his eyes tight as he thought about his capture so close to escape and success. The last thing that flashed through his mind before he had blacked out was, "At least it'll be over quick and I won't know anything about it."

"How wrong I was," he sighed.

Indeed he had been very wrong. When he had regained consciousness, Rio had found himself tied up and bound in the great throne room of Marblehead. Lord Fear and Lissard were peering at him.

"What fiendishness does your Lordness intend to do to this intruder?" Lissard inquired. "Would you wish for me to feed him to the Great Stoniness?"

"No, Lissard, he'd probably just give it indigestion. And a troll with an upset stomach is not a pleasant thought, now is it?" Lord Fear chuckled. "No, Lissard, I have a better idea."

"Why don't you just kill me and get it over with, Bone Face?" Rio said defiantly. "I'm not scared of you, or your pet tadpole either!"

"My, but you do have some nerve and spirit, don't you, my little guinea pig," Lord Fear leered.

"What does your Lordness intend?" Lissard asked again.

"Well, me old newt, you're no doubt aware of the problems with my legions of skeletrons. Oh, they're good fighters, I grant you, and cheap to make, but that's the trouble."

"Lordness?"

"They are so cheap that they break, you clod! They're only bones and transistors - one good hit and they shatter like a mirror does when you look into it with your ugly features, plus they're as intelligent as Sly Hands, and that's an insult to Hands! But I've come up with a solution - live skeletrons with brains! We take our little *volunteer* here and turn him

into a skeletron, or at least a semi-skeletron. We leave most of the body as it is but we alter his mind so he's an obedient servant to me!"

"I'll never be your slave, Fear!" Rio yelled.

"Oh yes, you will. Take him away!"

The next couple of days had been living nightmares that Rio wouldn't have wished on anyone as his body was mutilated and augmented with technomagic. His limbs were removed and replaced with the metal limbs he now had. The process would almost certainly have been completed and he would have been brainwashed, had it not been for a lucky break he got when the apothecary that Lord Fear had charged with carrying out this ghastly experiment, a woman by the name of Bethsemane Saxon-Bryce, forgot to tighten his bonds on the table. Rio had broken free, knocked out the apothecary and escaped Marblehead through the sewers. Somehow he had managed to make his way back to Dunshelm and his garrison of Rangers. They had been appalled when they saw him. Both Hordriss the Confuser and Rothberry the Apothecary had tried to correct the damage, but it was all but irreversible.

"And now here I am," he said bitterly, "probably about to be invalided out of the service." He gritted his teeth "I swear I will get Fear for this. Him, his Goblin Master, that slimy Atlantian and that witch of an apothecary!"

Just then his dark and gloomy thoughts were interrupted by a faint humming noise. It was his spyglass. All Rangers were issued with one so as to keep in touch with each other and their chief.

"Must have made up his mind," Rio thought to himself. "Oh well, best get this over with." He reluctantly got his spyglass out of the pocket of his jacket that was hanging on the hut door and activated it. Sure enough, the face of his chief appeared.

"Good evening, Rio. How are you?" the chief enquired politely.

"He's trying to soften the blow by making small talk," Rio said to himself. "Fine, sir, but I'm rather bored and would like to know when I'm coming back to active duty." Rio wasn't in the mood for beating about the bush. *Just discharge me and get it over with*, he thought, and gritted his teeth.

"Yes, about that, Rio... you know my feeling on this matter. I mean, you've been very seriously maimed and Heaven only knows what damage that technomagic has done to your body that we don't yet know about. I've got to take your welfare and the welfare of the other Rangers into consideration. You could pose a risk to them should you suffer any side-effects from this ordeal whilst on active duty. So a decision has had to be made as to your future."

"Here it comes." Rio readied himself.

"I was of the opinion that it would be best for all concerned if you were to be honourably discharged, with full benefits." Rio's heart sank. "However," the chief continued, and Rio's ears pricked up. Could it be? "Dungeon Master Treguard was of another opinion. He feels you should be given a chance to prove you can still cope with fieldwork."

Rio couldn't believe what he was hearing. He was being reprieved, and the chief still wasn't finished. "So consider yourself back on active service. You're to report to Nightmare Castle first thing in the morning. The Dungeon Master has an assignment lined up for you. So get some rest and good luck, Rio."

The chief's face faded from the spyglass. Rio couldn't move for a moment or two; he didn't dare in case this was all a dream and he woke himself up. He was going to get another chance, a chance to prove he could still do his job as well as he had before. He went back to bed. Tomorrow would be a new start for him, a new day and a new assignment, one chosen for him by the Dungeon Master himself! He would make the most of this. He would succeed in whatever task Treguard set him; that would be his revenge against Lord Fear - to prove that, in spite of what he had done to him, what he had put him through, and despite the damage done to his body, he was still able to fight the Opposition forces and win! With these thoughts in his mind Rio drifted off to sleep. It was the first restful night's sleep he had had in a long while.

**THE END**



## POETRY CORNER

Following hot on the heels of Dickon's winning team, tiny little Jeremy, Amanda, Alexander and Anthony were probably not expected to last more than a few minutes, but they gave the Dungeon a good run for its money nonetheless!

Three As and a J from London came  
To take on Nightmare Castle's game.  
Past the door with truths all three,  
With Pickle's help supplied for free!  
Then on to make a pact with Malice,  
To find a certain silver chalice.  
Through the forest, to the inn,  
Where Jez's joke caused quite a grin!  
Motley gave a magic spell  
To floor Fatilla at the well.  
Two with Oakley was the score,  
The timer stopped a moving floor.  
In level two, the goblin's gaze  
Soon caused much alarm to raise.  
With cloth in place, and riddle won  
A Joker card might bring some fun!  
But then, alas, their fate was sealed,  
The crumbling floor was quick to yield.  
Jeremy soon faced defeat,  
As nothing was beneath his feet!

## PUZZLE ANSWERS

### I Think I Read Somewhere...

- 1.) Folly, *Knightmare*.
- 2.) Elshander, *Fortress of Assassins*.
- 3.) Lucy, *Lord Fear's Domain*.
- 4.) Aesandre, *The Forbidden Gate*.
- 5.) Gruagach, *Knightmare*.
- 6.) Hugo of Alvingham, *The Labyrinths of Fear*.
- 7.) Erica (Morgana), *The Sorcerer's Isle*.
- 8.) Fay, *The Dragon's Lair*.
- 9.) Paul, *Lord Fear's Domain*.
- 10.) Arawn, *The Labyrinths of Fear*.
- 11.) Caedmon, *The Dragon's Lair*.
- 12.) Lancelot (Uwain), *The Sorcerer's Isle*.
- 13.) Aesandre, *The Dragon's Lair*.
- 14.) Pickle, *Fortress of Assassins*.
- 15.) Treguard, *The Labyrinths of Fear*.
- 16.) Hordriss, *Fortress of Assassins*.
- 17.) The troll, *Knightmare*.
- 18.) The leper, *The Sorcerer's Isle*.
- 19.) Motley, *The Forbidden Gate*.
- 20.) Brother Mace, *The Dragon's Lair*.
- 21.) Granitas, *The Labyrinths of Fear*.
- 22.) Merlin, *Knightmare*.
- 23.) Lillith, *The Labyrinths of Fear*.
- 24.) The maiden in the fountain, *The Sorcerer's Isle*.